

# NOBODY'S MAN:—By E. Phillips Oppenheim

How a Great Leader, Almost Ruined by a Money Marriage and a Faithless Wife, Regains Success and Happiness Through the Unusual Woman's Love. A Fascinatingly Told in This Story of Intrigue, Politics, Mystery and Romance by the Noted Author of "The Great Impersonation," "The Profiteers," "The Great Prince Shan" and a Score of "Best Sellers."

### THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Andrew Tallente, political leader, has married for money. His wife accepted him to forward social ambitions to a title. Losing his seat in Parliament he meets her recommendations with the statement that their marriage has been unsuccessful, owing to her cold and selfish temperament and her interest in his young secretary, Anthony Palliser, who has just disappeared. She has a sudden suspicion that her husband is responsible for the disappearance. Lady Jane Partington, a beautiful and wealthy aristocrat interested in labor problems, is a neighbor who interests Andrew greatly. He tells her he and his wife have parted. Andrew has missed some valuable political papers, and is engaged with Palliser on the edge of a cliff has struck him. The secretary fell over. Andrew, formerly an Alpinist, has climbed down to the ledge below, but found no trace of Palliser. He is observed by Inspector Gillian, of the police, Stephen Darterey, the great labor party leader, comes down to Tallente's part of the country.



And behind all these things there was a flame in the man, a perfect passion for justice

### AND HERE IT CONTINUES

"WHAT does Darterey want with me?" Tallente interrupted a little brusquely. "It is no part of my mission to explain," Miller replied. "I understand you to come here and beg you to return at once." Tallente turned to Lady Jane. "You will forgive me?" he begged. "In any case, you must have been going in a few minutes." "I should forgive you even if you went without saying good-bye," she replied. "And I can assure you that I shall not be any longer than it takes to turn your head," she went on pleasantly, as she walked by his side to ward the door and across the hall. "But for the last two or three years the only political figures who have interested me at all have been Darterey and yourself—you as the man of action, and Darterey as the most wonderful exponent of the real, higher Socialism. I had a shelf made for his three books alone. They hang in my bedroom and I look upon them as my text-books." "I must tell Darterey this," Miller remarked from behind. "I am sure he'll be flattered."

Miller felt that he was suffering defeat. He opened his lips and closed them again. The peculiar reference to Lady Jane remained unspoken. There was something in the calm aloofness of the man by his side which intimidated even while it annoyed him. Soon they commenced the drop from the mountain to whose, far away below, the manor with its lawn and gardens and outbuildings seemed like a child's pleasure palace. Miller leaned forward and pointed downwards. "There," Darterey said, "is the spot where the man who has struck him. The secretary fell over. Andrew, formerly an Alpinist, has climbed down to the ledge below, but found no trace of Palliser. He is observed by Inspector Gillian, of the police, Stephen Darterey, the great labor party leader, comes down to Tallente's part of the country." "AND HERE IT CONTINUES"

"I know her by sight, of course," Tallente admitted. "She is a very beautiful young woman. It will give me great pleasure to meet her."

### CHAPTER IX

Tallente took tea that afternoon with his three guests upon the terrace. Behind the terrace, the sea was a mass of blue cliffs, with here and there great gashes of scoured sandstone. Beyond lay the sloping meadow, with its clumps of bracken and gray stone in the background, a more rugged line of rocky cliffs. The sea in the bay flashed and glittered in the long rays of the afternoon sun. The scene was extraordinarily beautiful.

Stephen Darterey for the first few minutes certainly justified his reputation for spontaneity. He leaned back in a long wicker chair, his head resting upon his hand, his thoughtful eyes fixed upon vacancy. No man in those days could have resembled less a popular leader of the people. In appearance he was a typical aristocrat, and his expression, notwithstanding his fine forehead and thoughtful eyes, was marked with a certain simplicity which in his younger days had bred many an inexperienced debater on to ridicule and extinction. In an intensely curious age, Darterey was still a man over whose head the controversy raged fiercely. He was a poet, a dreamer, a writer of elegant prose, an orator, an artist. And behind all these things there was a flame in the man, a perfect passion for justice, for seeing people in their right places, which had led him from the more flowery ways into the world of politics. His enemies called him a dilettante and a poseur. His friends were led into rhapsodies through sheer affection. His supporters hailed him as the one man of genius who held out the scales of justice before the world.

"Of course," Nora Mill observed, looking up at her host pleasantly. "I can see what is going to happen. Mr. Darterey is going to talk to you upon most important matters. This place, the beauty of it all, is acting upon him like a soporific. If we don't shake him up presently, he will go away with wonderful mind pictures of your cliffs and sea, and his whole mission unfulfilled."

"Very likely Mr. Tallente doesn't wish to improve his acquaintance with me," she said. Tallente hastened to reassure her. Somehow, the presence of these two did much to soothe the mental irritation which Miller had set up in him. They at least were of the world of understanding things. Miller, slouching in his chair, with a cheap tie-clip showing underneath his waistcoat, a bulging mass of wool descending over the top of his head, rolling a cigarette with yellow-stained, objectionable fingers, still involved him in introspective speculation as to real values in life.

"I have never felt myself unfortunate in not having met you before, Miss Mill," he said. "Some of your writings have interested me immensely." "Some of them?" she queried, with a smile. "Absolute agreement would deny us even the stimulus of an argument," he observed. "Besides, after all, men find it more difficult to get rid of prejudice than women."

"She leaned forward to help herself to a cigarette and he studied her for a moment. She was a little under-mountain height, set almost squarely built. Her mouth was delightful, humorous and attractive, and her eyes were of the deepest shade of violet, with hard, steady glances. Her voice was the voice of a cultivated woman, and Tallente, as he mostly listened to her light ripple of conversation, realized that the charm which was here, by reputation was by no means undeserved. In many ways she astonished him. The stories which had been told of her, even written, were incredible, yet her manners were entirely the manners of one of his own world. The trio—Darterey, with his silence and occasional inexpressible remarks—seemed to draw closer together as they conversed with Miller, obviously chafing at his isolation, thrust himself into the conversation.

"You did," his host acknowledged drily. "You succeeded in cheating me out of the seat. I still don't know why." He turned as though appealing to Darterey, and Darterey accepted the challenge, swinging a little around in his chair and tapping his cigarette against the table, preparatory to lighting it. "You lost Hellefield, Mr. Tallente, as you would have lost any seat north of Bedford," he declared. "Being to the influence of the Democrats?" "Certainly."

"But why is that influence exercised against me?" Tallente demanded. "I thought that I have an opportunity of asking you that question, Darterey. Surely you would reckon me more of a people's man than these Whigs and Coalitionists?" "Very much more," Darterey agreed.

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